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# HOW TO CLEAN AND DEFROST THE REFRIGERATOR

A clean refrigerator will help keep your food from spoiling. When the refrigerator is clean, it cools better and costs less to run.

When food keeps, *you* save money. Spoiled food can make you sick.

## CLEAN AND DEFROST YOUR REFRIGERATOR

Wash the inside of the refrigerator just before you do the weekly food shopping. (Fig. 1) That will make it clean to store the fresh food you buy.

Many newer refrigerators are "frost free" or defrost automatically. If your refrigerator is one of these, you need not defrost. But, you still need to wash and clean the inside regularly.

If your refrigerator does not defrost automatically, it should be defrosted when frost on outside walls of the freezing section is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick.

## GETTING READY TO DEFROST

Turn the refrigerator controls—the dial—to the word "Defrost" if it has that setting. Or turn the dial to "Off." (Fig. 2)

Take out ice cube trays and frozen food. Put frozen food in a cardboard box. Wrap food in layers of newspapers. Cover with lots of newspapers. This helps keep the food from thawing.



Fig. 1

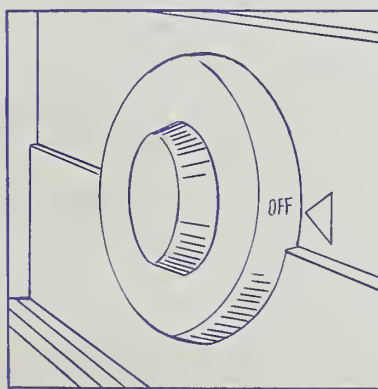


Fig. 2

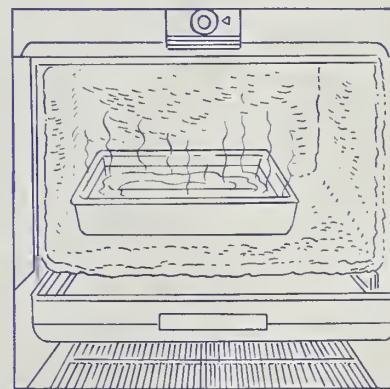


Fig. 3

Put a large pan of hot water in the freezing section of the refrigerator. (Fig. 3) This speeds up melting. Let the ice melt. *Do not* scrape or punch with a knife or sharp tool. You could damage the freezing unit.

Put a pan under the freezing section to catch water. Some refrigerators have a drip pan. Empty the pan when it gets full.

While the ice and frost are melting, take everything out of the refrigerator.

- Take out all food, jars, and cans. Set these on a table or counter.
- Throw away spoiled food.
- Take out the shelves and drawers for cleaning, if you can.

## CLEANING YOUR REFRIGERATOR

To clean the inside of the refrigerator, use detergent water or 2 tablespoons of baking soda mixed with 1 quart warm water. Soda water helps take away bad food odors.

Wash any parts you have taken out of the refrigerator, with the baking soda and water or detergent and water. When the frost is melted in the freezing section, pour out the melted water from the tray under the freezer. Be sure all of the ice is off the freezing unit. Empty the pans of water used to speed up the melting. Wash the freezing section and the tray underneath.



Fig. 4

Wash the inside of the refrigerator—the top, walls, and bottom and any shelves you couldn't get out. Be sure to wash into all the corners. Rub hard-to-clean spots with dry soda.

Squeeze a clean cloth or sponge out of warm rinse water. Use this to rinse out the inside of the refrigerator. Finish up by wiping the inside with a clean, dry cloth. Wash the inside of the refrigerator door and the rubber or plastic strip around the edge of the door. (Fig. 4) Rinse and dry. The rubber strip should be dried with a clean, dry cloth.

Replace shelves, drawers, and other parts of the refrigerator. Empty the ice cube trays and wash them with warm sudsy water. Rinse them with clean warm water, then fill them with clean cold water. Put them back into the refrigerator. Wipe all the cans, jars, and bottles with a clean, dry towel. Wipe off fresh fruits and vegetables. Put food back into the refrigerator.

Turn the control dial to a medium temperature setting or "ON."

With warm sudsy water, wash the outside of

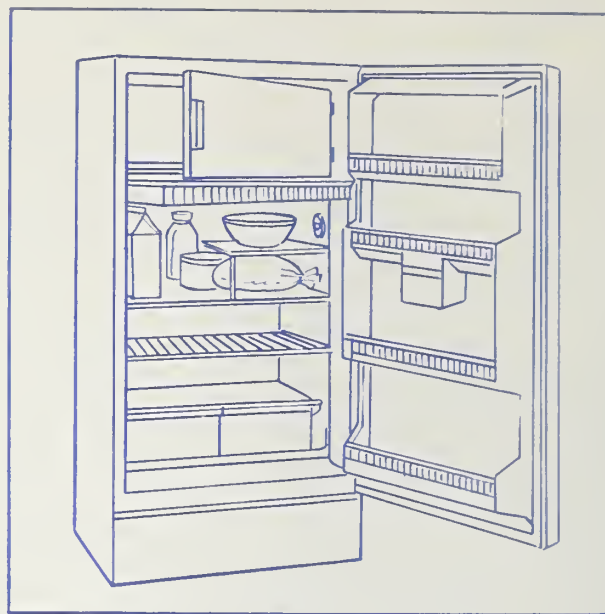


Fig. 5

the refrigerator and then rinse with clean warm water. Dry with a clean cloth.

You may wax the outside two or three times a year with a white liquid wax. This makes it easier to clean and it will stay clean longer.

## TIPS ON KEEPING YOUR REFRIGERATOR CLEAN

When food is spilled in the refrigerator, wipe it up right away so it won't stain the finish or cause odors. Keep all food covered. (Fig. 5) Don't collect leftovers.

Open the door as few times as you can. Close it quickly after each use. When warm air gets inside the refrigerator the motor must work harder. This costs you money for a higher electric bill. This also makes work because you will need to defrost the refrigerator more often.

Use a damp cloth to wipe dust off new cans and jars just brought home from the store before you put them in the refrigerator. This helps keep the refrigerator clean.

This publication was adapted by Glenda Pifer, Housing Specialist, from "How to Clean and Defrost Your Refrigerator"—Special Circular 158, by Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wisconsin. Issued November 1973.